

Last Tuesday, folks across the nation and the world recognized the one year anniversary of the successful mission to eliminate Osama bin Laden, a man whose horrible reign of terror caused the deaths of thousands of innocent people around the world. The success of this mission is a testament to the collective skill and shared sense of determination by the dedicated patriots who planned, managed, and executed the assault, and it is fitting that the anniversary coincides with Public Service Recognition Week. The CIA officers and analysts maintaining constant surveillance over bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad, the military and civilian staff at the Pentagon, and finally the skilled members of our Army and Navy who carried out the assault are all prime examples of dedication to our nation and to a life of public service. Without the constant vigilance of public servants like these folks performing vital duties across the spectrum of our military and civilian workforce, our freedoms would be truly at risk.

Our region is certainly an area where public service is a popular way of life. I have been fortunate to get to know a great deal of devoted public servants through the years. Interacting with these folks and witnessing the great work that they do day in and day out for the good of their communities and their country is truly inspirational. The folks at the FAA protect our skies, those with the intelligence community prevent terrorist attacks, the members of the various branches of our armed forces preserve our freedoms, and the law enforcement community looks out for our safety. Our servicemen and women and our civilian public servants are the best in the world, and I am so grateful for their service.

This past week was full of opportunities to meet with folks in the district and hear from them about the issues they're concerned about, and I was able to interact with a variety of different groups. In Fredericksburg on Wednesday, I enjoyed speaking with young business leaders as well as a local homeowners' association in Prince William County, and I spent Thursday meeting with constituents in my Yorktown district office. It was especially great to sit down with 5th graders at Cople Elementary in Hague on Friday morning to discuss my role as their representative. All of the folks I met with had a wide array of concerns about the legislative priorities they want to see coming out of Washington. The uncertainty about the country's economic climate and the potential for across-the-board tax increases on hardworking Americans in 2013 have been of particular concern to folks lately. I stressed to them my belief that spending reductions and fundamental tax reform are essential in order for our economy to recover. On Thursday, I was honored to attend the groundbreaking of new Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding. There is no doubt that Virginia and our nation have the world's best shipbuilders, and this new facility will be instrumental to enhance our shipbuilding innovation and infrastructure. I am excited to see the Apprentice School continue to produce the world's finest shipbuilders.

So many folks this week had great ideas and concerns for me to take back to Washington; I am always grateful for these “constituent work periods” that allow me to visit places like Fredericksburg, Yorktown, and Tappahannock, and other places around the district. This is where the common-sense solutions to this nation’s challenges are found. Please keep your thoughts and ideas coming to me. I can be reached via my website (www.wittman.house.gov), by phone (202-225-4261), on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/RobWittman>), or on Facebook (www.facebook.com/RepRobWittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.